



# Egremont News

Issue 11

September, 2003

## In the news:

### SELECTMEN:

We welcome new Zoning Board of Appeals alternate Colleen Simo. We also welcome Valerie Spriggs, new SBRSD School Superintendent.

Our Web Page still is not complete. Thank you to Kathy Fracasse who got our site name approved. Are there any volunteers who would like to complete the site?

The Select Board and Planning Board continue the Bylaw review process. The next community working meeting is set for October 16<sup>th</sup>. Watch for more info.

The Select Board will continue to meet on an every other week basis throughout September and will return to every Tuesday evening in October.

The Town of Egremont has successfully begun to include the community in various projects that have had or will have a major impact on the Town: the purchase of and building of the Water Department; the studying of a Waste Water Management system; and the review of our Zoning bylaws. All of these projects were and are being implemented by volunteers and a great deal of public input.

Several special town meetings may be held in the upcoming months to vote on the Waste Water Management System and the newly re-codified Zoning Bylaws. Watch for more information.

### TREASURER/COLLECTOR:

The August first bills were the first for the up graded billing system for Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes. As in the past, the preliminary tax bills DO NOT reflect property type or value. The Preliminary bills are based on 1/2 of the actual FY03 bill. The tax bills mailed for January 1<sup>st</sup> are the actual tax bills reflecting the new tax rate, values and changes. Bills will be mailed quarterly to assist tax payers in making timely payments.

Remember: Postmark is not accepted as timely, nor are back dated checks. Please use the e-mail address to make requests for general information that can be posted in this news letter, as it will be printed every other month. Tax Collector hours 7am-3pm, Monday thru Friday.

### BOARD OF HEALTH:

Ah the beautiful Berkshires. Clean, fresh air and wide open spaces. Mother Nature is just calling you outside to take advantage of the great outdoors. The only thing missing from this pastoral scene just described are those nasty insects that seem to be threatening our every moment of outside enjoyment. We're talking ticks and mosquitoes here folks and they are no longer mere annoyances – they are now serious health threats.

By now just about everyone has heard of Lyme Disease, a malady caused by the bite from a deer tick. Ask anyone who has had it and they will tell you it is not a pleasant experience. Symptoms can range from minor aches and pains in the early stages to the more serious brain and heart disorders in its later stages. It is an elusive disease, meaning it is sometimes difficult to positively diagnose, and affects different people in different ways. Some people get the tell-tale bull's eye rash at the bite site, others don't know they have been bitten until only after symptoms have started to develop. The key to successful treatment is getting early medical attention. Most people respond well to the standard antibiotic treatment. Others though are not that lucky and symptoms can persist indefinitely.

West Nile Virus (WNV) has been getting a lot of publicity lately due to the growing number of confirmed cases in humans and wet weather we have experienced this past year which is the perfect growing environment for the carrier insect. WNV is a form of encephalitis and is spread by mosquitoes that are infected with the virus. Mild WNV infections cause fever, headache and body aches, often with a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. More severe infections can cause headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, paralysis and, sometimes death. However, most WNV infections do not cause any symptoms.

The purpose in telling you this is not to cause panic or banish you indoors and watch the beautiful weather pass you by. Man and bug can live in harmony if man learns to educate himself about the potential dangers and take the proper precautions. Preventing the insects from biting you is the key to avoiding insect borne illnesses. Avoid areas with known populations of ticks (deep woods and tall grass) and avoid outside exposure during dawn and dusk, the prime mosquito feeding time. When outside the simple use an insect repellent with DEET (N-N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) applied to your skin is an excellent preventative measure. (Never use DEET on infants, though) Yes, DEET is a chemical but the dangers from Lyme Disease and WNV are far greater. Take special care to cover up the arms and legs of children playing outdoors. When you bring a baby outdoors, cover the baby's carriage or playpen with mosquito netting. Fix any holes in your screens and make sure they are tightly attached to all of your doors and windows.

Take a look around your property and see if you can eliminate mosquito-breeding areas. Dispose of or regularly empty any metal cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots and other water holding containers. Drill holes in the bottom of recycling containers that are left outdoors, so that water can drain out. Clean clogged roof gutters; remove leaves and debris that may prevent drainage of rainwater. Turn over plastic wading pools and wheelbarrows when not in use. Do not allow water to stagnate in birdbaths; aerate ornamental ponds or stock them with

fish. Keep swimming pools clean and properly chlorinated; remove standing water from pool covers.

The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" really holds true when facing the potential dangers of insect borne illnesses. Late summer and all of autumn are great times of the year here in the Berkshires. Enjoy, have fun, but take the proper precautions to protect your good health.

#### **FRENCH PARK:**

Looking for a volunteer to map trails and for membership on the Committee. The August French Park day was canceled. It is hoped that a spring event can be planned. What would you like to see at the Park that isn't already there? Is there anything that we can improve on? See survey at end of newsletter.

#### **WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:**

Be sure to set aside the following two dates: September 6<sup>th</sup> and September 29<sup>th</sup>. The Waste Water Management Committee and the Board of Health, as it continues its work on the comprehensive plan for an Egremont public wastewater system, is holding two really important meetings: one to report on its findings to the community; and the second to hear the community's responses.

This is the time to get the actual facts on what has been happening, and what is planned, as opposed to hearsay.

Everyone should hear the story directly, rather than what a neighbor partly heard. And no one should say, a year from now, why wasn't I consulted? The matter is of concern for all who live in Egremont but especially those living in the two targeted service areas, portions of the South Egremont village and the North Egremont village and lake area. Maps will be available on the 6<sup>th</sup> showing the likely sites, though not the final mapping.

The information-giving meeting takes place on Saturday morning, 9:30 AM, September 6<sup>th</sup> at the South Egremont Congregational Church, next to the South Egremont Fire Station. And at the public hearing that follows, on Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM, the committee will listen and people will have an opportunity to voice their feelings and thoughts to the committee.

Everybody is urged to attend both meetings, especially those most affected, and hopefully all will come away from this process more informed.

#### **LIBRARY:**

The Friends of the Egremont Free Library got off to a great start this year with their Book Sale & Silent Auction on Memorial Day Weekend. The funds raised, particularly from the winning bids for auction items generously donated by individuals and businesses in the Town, were sufficient to purchase a new computer for Librarian, Sally Caldwell. Sally has moved her old computer into the children's section and plans to begin building a library of educational and appropriate game CD's.

Working with Sally and the Library Trustees, this month the Friends are also funding and undertaking two additional projects that will make the Library more "user friendly". First, the Friends are purchasing an air conditioner that will keep the

Library more comfortable on the hotter and more humid days. Then, new shelving will be installed in the back entrance room to provide more capacity for past issues of magazines and paperback books, and add a section for the continuous sale of surplus books.

In Egremont, we have a small, but very complete Library in a wonderful, historic building, we have a caring and dedicated Librarian, and we are blessed with the support of many Town residents. Thanks to all those who have participated in Friends activities or have supported the Library with donations. The Friends urge you to visit your Library and to take advantage of all that it has to offer.

We love books at the Egremont Free Library, but right now, we have enough. Please do not drop off books either in the book box or at the back door. Thanks.

#### **EGREMONT PLANNING BOARD:**

The Planning Board is continuing to work jointly with the Board of Selectmen under the \$30,000 Community Development Planning grant received from the state.

One phase of that grant process includes re-formatting and re-codifying Egremont's zoning bylaws. A Community Forum was held on June 6, 2003, with Planner Jeanne Armstrong's presentation of "Zoning 101", explaining how zoning works and what zoning is able to accomplish. A video of that presentation is available for borrowing at the town hall and library. Jeanne conducted a planning exercise so those attending could help in identifying troublesome areas of the bylaw to be clarified and corrected. Armstrong was available to repeat that process on July 21, 2003, at a joint meeting of the planning board and select board. At that meeting, all bylaw problem areas identified were consolidated for presentation to Attorney Mark Bobrowski, who is working on a bylaw proposal to eliminate ambiguities and legal inconsistencies and format the bylaw for future changes. At this time, the new draft bylaw proposal will include clarification of the current bylaw. A list will also be created of possible substantive changes to be addressed in the future.

Another phase of the grant includes the production of community maps according to state guidelines. This work is being done by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

The third phase of the grant involves a transportation study of areas of the north and south villages, looking at issues of traffic and pedestrian safety. This work is being done by Clough Harbour Associates of Albany, under the coordination of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

The upcoming schedule under this grant process is as follows:

September 8 or 9 (tbd), 2003 7:00 PM Town Hall:

Town Boards and officials review first draft of bylaw form Attorney Bobrowski and also first draft of maps produced by BRPC.

October 1, 2003 7:00 PM Town Hall:

Joint boards meet with Jeanne Armstrong to review draft bylaw and maps and prepare for Community Working Meeting.

October 16, 2003 6:45 PM Registration  
7:00 PM Meeting:

Undermountain Elementary Cafeteria  
Community Working Meeting to review bylaw draft and maps.

November 10, 2003 7:00 PM Town Hall:

Joint boards meet with Jeanne Armstrong to review input from Community Working Meeting, including finalizing information to go to Attorney Bobrowski, discussion of map implications, and list of possible future areas of change for the bylaws.

January through April: Work toward a Special Town meeting in the spring, including a second Community Working Meeting in January or February, followed by a Public Hearing possibly in March.

All meetings are open to the public, with public input solicited at the Community Working Meetings and Public Hearing or in writing to the Planning Board or Select board. Input from townspeople about areas of confusion in our current bylaw will help to assure that all such ambiguities are corrected in the new bylaw.

#### **TRANSFER STATION/RECYCLING CENTER:**

New stickers are available for the Fiscal Year 2004. Please stop by or call the Selectmen's Office to get them. You will not be allowed to dump at the site without a sticker.

We are now accepting old or broken cell phones. Drop at either Town Hall or the Transfer Station.

#### **BUILDING INSPECTOR:**

A building permit is not required for the following.

Conformance with other town bylaws is required. Any thing over the sizes noted does require a building permit. The Building Inspector is in Tuesday afternoons 12:30pm to 3:30pm

1. One story detached accessory building used as tool shed or storage shed, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet.

2. Fences six feet in height or less.

3. Retaining walls which, in the opinion of the building official, are not a threat to the public safety, health or welfare and which retain less than four feet of unbalanced fill.

4. Ordinary repairs as defined in 780 CMR 2. Not including the cutting away of any wall, partition or portion thereof, the removal or cutting of any structural beam, column or other load-bearing support, or the removal or change of any required means of egress, or rearrangement of parts of a structure affecting the egress requirements; nor shall ordinary repairs include addition to, alteration of, replacement or relocation of any standpipe, water supply, mechanical system, fire protection system, energy conservation system or other work affecting public health or general safety.

#### **REMINDERS:**

Permits are required for any type of home alarm system.

Radio Shack sells severe weather warning radios - which will warn you at any time of the day or night of approaching severe weather - prices start at \$25.

If you wish to use the pavilion at French Park for a function or event, call the Town Hall.

Did you know the Lee VNA holds a blood pressure clinic at Town Hall the First Wednesday of every month at 11:30 - 12:30. Watch for notice of flue clinic, cholesterol and glucose testing.

#### **EGREMONT LAND TRUST:**

Schedule-Save the dates!

September 13: Annual Meeting - French Park in North Egremont  
11 a.m.

October 18: Kay Sadighi, The Nature Conservancy's GIS/GPS expert, will show us how it all works. Meet in the parking lot at Jug End State Park at 9 a.m.. Somewhere in the woods we'll calculate our position using the new Global Information System/Global Positioning System technology and then visit TNC's new GIS/GPS center in Sheffield. Limit: 12 participants.

All ELT events are free and open to everyone. For the latest information, leave a message at ELT's office: 528-6626. And watch for the opening of our website: [www.egremontlandtrust.org](http://www.egremontlandtrust.org)

#### **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH:**

As most of you know, an Emergency Shelter has been established at the First Congregational Church. With the help of the Civic Association and several generous donors, we are prepared to assist in the event of storms, power outages, etc.

However, whether used or not, there are a few on going expenses - one of which is the rental of the propane gas tank. We will be glad to receive your donations, whatever the size, to help with such expenses. You tax deductible gift may be sent c/o The Shelter Fund, P.O. Box 55, So. Egremont MA 01258 or to Evelyn Willcox, 129 Baldwin Hill, Great Barrington MA 01230.

**BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE:**

Assessors - Wednesdays 9am to 11am & Tuesdays 7pm to 9pm  
 Board of Health - Thursdays 10am to 11am  
 Board of Selectmen - Tuesday evenings 7pm  
 Planning Board - Second & Fourth Monday 7:30pm  
 Archives Room - September 6, September 15,  
 October 4 and October 20  
 Building Inspector - Tuesdays 12:30pm - 3:30pm  
 Town Clerk - Tuesday evenings 7pm - 9pm  
 Conservation Commission - Second and Fourth  
 Thursdays 7:00pm  
 Waste Water Management - Third Tuesday 3:30pm  
 Water Department - Fourth Thursday 4:30pm

**TURTLE ROCK**

**David Allan Hunter**  
**early 1920's**

*Oftentimes I go a-walking  
 Down the road at eventime  
 Just to view that little village  
 And pursue some fitful rime.  
 Then there's something bids me daily  
 On the bridge that I may look  
 At that ancient, monster turtle  
 Where he crouches in the brook.*

*He's a lazy, stupid fellow  
 For he never makes a sound  
 And I never saw him stretching  
 Out his neck to look around.  
 He just crouches there and listens  
 To the brooklet as it runs  
 But he never stirs his body  
 Which is measured in the tons.*

*When he came to this location  
 I have never yet been told.  
 But I know by his appearance  
 He is very, very old.  
 He is free from care and worry,  
 (Though there's moss upon his shell.)  
 Has no fear of any weather  
 And no hunger to dispel.*

*He need never crave for water  
 For it runs beneath his nose  
 And there's very little danger  
 Of him frosting any toes.  
 You could ask him his opinions  
 Of the joys that he has known.  
 But he'll never make an answer—  
 For he's made of solid stone!*

Did you know that Prospect Lake was originally called Keewena  
 by the Indians, later Spoor's Pond, Winchell Pond and presently  
 Prospect Lake.